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QUESTIONS OF PRECEDENCE REVIVED IN WASHINGTON

(Mail Special to the Advertiser.)

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 9 .-- Not a winter passes in Washington that the Speaker of the House of Representatives does not have to fight for his official precedence. Men seem to be constantly lying in wait for a chance to chuck him away in a corner. The trouble it bobs up even at funerals.

At the obsequies of General Grant the late Speaker Reed was one of the prominent officials present. When it came to putting the officials in carriages for the procession to the grave, Mr. Reed was chagrined to find himself bringing up the rear of the procession. "I wouldn't make a row at a funeral," drawled the Speaker, in describing the matter afterwards, "but, although I submissively entered the carriage they had picked out for me, I did give them a terrible jacking up after the funeral was over."

Last winter the trouble arose over a question of precedence between Senator Frye, as President pro tempore of that branch of Congress, and Speaker Cannon. In his individual capacity, Mr. Cannon is the most docile man in the world as to where he shall be seated at dinner. "If the President wants to invite me to dinner as Mr. Cannon," he once said to Secretary Loeb, in the course of some diplomatic negotiations over the precedence question, "he can put me anywhere he chooses. I will sit at the foot of the table without a murmur. But if he invites me to a state dinner as Speaker of bership fee will be raised to \$5.50 on the House of Representatives, I must have the place that my office is entitled to according to precedents. Otherwise I have a hundred people on my back." At other interviews on the subject heretofore, it has been intimated that when Mr. Cannon is invited to an official dinner, it will be well to send a diagram of the guests along with

> The question of precedence over Senator Frye was settled months ago in favor of the Speaker. That is because Mr. Frye is not Vice President and successor to the President. He is only presiding officer of the Senate, but draws the same salary as the Vice President and performs identically the same duties. The late President McKinley after many serious conferences on the subject, decided that the Vice President should have precedence at dinners over the Speaker, because the Vice President is inseparably connected with the President Speaker Cannon acquiesces in that thoroughly and will willingly yield the pas to Mr. Fairbanks after March 4. Senator Frve, however, has to walk behind the Speaker and cannot take Mrs. Roosevelt out to dinner, when Speaker Cannon is present at the same

> There was also some difficulty about a year ago, over the place that Miss Helen Cannon, the Speaker's daughter, should have at White House dinners. Somebody placed her near the foot of the table. As Mr. Cannon is a widower, Miss Cannon is the head of his household. All other ladies of the Congressional circle, including the wives of Senators, recognize her as their social leader by paying the first call. When the matter of her seat at official dinners was taken up by one of Speaker Cannon's friends, it was answered at the White House that Miss Cannon was only the chatelaine of the Speaker's household and therefore not entitled to the social honors his wife would have.

> "Very well," was the answer, "if you choose to put that interpretation upon it, there will be no one to say you nay. But Miss Cannon is regarded in the Congressional circle as the head of her father's household, just as Miss Cleveland was regarded as the mistress of the White House till her brother married. She will not, of course, decline invitations to dine at the White House but whenever they are tendered she will have a valid excuse that can not be refused. She will have the grip or be otherwise very ill."

Finally the matter was taken to President Roosevelt. "Why, of course Miss Cannon is the head of the Speaker's household," said he. "She is entitled to all the social honors, as such, that his wife would be entitled to." That settled it.

A somewhat similar difficulty arose this winter over a misunderstanding. In December Secretary Loeb was called up by telephone and asked the official dates at the White House. That was information almost every prominent official is anxious to have, because he persons; cost \$4000-The Swell Thing does not wish to plan dinners or other affairs of his own or to accept. invitations elsewhere for any dates when he is likely to be invited & to the White House. The first date given out was January 12, that & pany, Honolulu, T. H. with \$5 and the Fundamental Laws of being the night of the Diplomatic reception. So Speaker and Miss 🕹 Hawaii will be immediately mailed to you, postage prepaid.

that that was the night of the cabinet dinner, the White House officials, by some slip, having failed to mention that as one of the dates, Mr. Cannon and Miss Cannon were invited to that dinner and forth with agreed to recall their own dinner invitations. The President demurred to this. They should have their dinner as planned and he and Mrs. Roosevelt would invite them to some state dinner subsequently.

State Hay to act as assistant host and therefore wanted the Secretary JUDD BUILDING. FORT STREET. to sit on his left, the dean of the Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador Cassini, having the place of honor, which was at Mrs. Roosevelt's

But the difficulty has been growing, notwithstanding the utmost | wm. G. Irwin.. President and Manager generally comes in seating guests at official dinners. But sometimes been facing it. It was not thought best to invite Speaker Cannon to the Diplomatic dinner, because the President wanted Secretary of right, while the mistress of the Ambassador's household would sit at the President's right. Speaker Cannon, like all his predecessors, Republicans and Democrats, refuses to be preceded by a member of the Cabinet and therefore would not attend a dinner where any one of the Cabinet officers had a seat higher up than he.

Finally the dinner to the Supreme Court was about at hand and invitations were sent out. Had Chief Justice Fuller been able to attend all would have been well. The Speaker, as chief man in the legislative branch ranks along with the chief man of the judicial branch. But Chief Justice Fuller is in mourning for his wife, who died last summer. He therefore could not accept the invitation. Speaker Cannon had been invited before it was remembered that the Chief Justice would have to be excused. That meant that Mr. Justice Harlan would be the ranking justice present and the Speaker would London. not yield precedence to him or to any of the associate justices, but above all not to Attorney General Moody, whom the President desired to have as assistant host, just as Secretary Hay had been assistant host at the Diplomatic dinner.

There was some personal correspondence between the President and the Speaker, inaugurated by the former. It was all in friendly mood and concluded with a suggestion that the President excuse him from the dinner, as there would be no feeling whatever on his part about it. The President accepted that suggestion and both are in the best of temper.

Nevertheless, Speaker and Miss Cannon have not been to any state dinner at the White House this winter. Under the assistant host arrangement it looks as though it would be impracticable for them to go there to any of the usual state dinners. So it is being talked that there may be an additional state dinner—a dinner to Congress. In that event Speaker Cannon would be the guest of honor and everything would be as merry as a marriage bell.

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